

# KEYS TO EFFECTIVE BIBLE STUDY

AARON BEARD  
TRUSSVILLE  
FEB 5, 2006

## INTRODUCTION:

- A. We live in a society where the majority of people profess to be Christians but yet have little to no knowledge of God's word!
  - 1. It's one thing to have little to no knowledge as a new Christian and to be studying to improve that, but its another to disregard study and stay ignorant of God's word!
  - 2. Surveys have shown that many claim to be Christians yet they could not tell you who Moses, Noah, or David were! There is something wrong with this picture!
- B. All of us here probably understand that Bible study is vital for Christians, in fact a necessary component of serving God! But the question arises, how do I study?

## I. EFFECTIVE BIBLE STUDY BEGINS WITH A PROPER ATTITUDE:

- A. Effective bible study starts with a healthy desire for God's word!
  - 1. Some act like studying God's word is the last thing they want to do! (**Psalm 119:97**)
    - a. Whenever you mention getting together for a "Bible Study" you can see it in their eyes & hear it in their responses! It's boring, to be avoided, better things to do
    - b. This attitude is reflected in a lack of attendance in organized Bible studies, a lack of knowledge of God's word, and even continual struggles with sin
  - 2. For spiritual growth to occur there needs to be a true passion for God's word! (**I Pet 2:1-3**)
    - a. We need the same kind of drive to be fed spiritually that they have physically
    - b. We'll look forward to Bible studies because we know we'll be fed, we set aside time to study personally, we'll look for small windows to sneak in added study time
    - c. Jesus described this as "hungering and thirsting" for righteousness (**Matt 5:6**)
- B. A positive or negative attitude in our study determines the effectiveness:
  - 1. If we study God's word with an angry spirit, it will not be effective! (**James 1:19-21**)
    - a. He studies & when he sees he needs to change, he gets upset → Often the preacher is the target of his anger, but then and in private study it's God!
    - b. Through word's power God cannot make this man righteous due to his attitude!
    - c. We must study God's word with meekness – An understanding that we are not perfect and that we need to grow and change – With a humble spirit!
  - 2. If we study and are blind to its application to us, it cannot benefit us! (**Rom 2:1**)
    - a. This is like one studying but only seeing how it applies to everyone else but him
    - b. Whether through pride or self-deception – He cannot see his own short-comings
    - c. James emphasizes we're to be doers of God's word, not just hearers (**Js 1:22ff**)
  - 3. We also should study with a understanding that it is God's word! (**I Thess 2:13**)
    - a. The Bible isn't the views of men – Men can be wrong and will change his opinions!
    - b. Some treat it like it's from man's mind! They will only accept the portions they like
    - c. Others may run it through their own logic first – Only accepts it if it makes sense
    - d. Being from God, it's always right and its instructions are always what's best for us!

## II. NOW, HOW SHOULD ONE GO ABOUT STUDYING THE BIBLE:

- A. Let's step back and answer a fundamental question: What is Bible study?
  - 1. First of all, study involves mental effort! (**2 Tim. 2:15**)
    - a. "Study..." – The Greek word means, "be diligent, labor, endeavor, make effort"
    - b. Be diligent implies study: How can you rightly handle it if you aren't studying it?
    - c. But see what this means – Rightly handling God's word is going to take EFFORT!
  - 2. There are some other passages that describe what Bible study involves:
    - a. David often spoke about "meditating" in God's law – Thought about it (**Ps 119:148**)
    - b. Bereans studied by comparison: What they heard to what they read (**Acts 17:11**)
    - c. It can also involve digging into the deeper things of the Bible which would demand much more time, more thought, and more research (**Heb 5:12-6:2**)
    - d. Bible study can range in how deep you are wanting to go – It may be surface study

- in casual reading or be like research – Both are good & necessary for growth!
3. As you study your Bible there's some basic questions you could ask yourself and answer:
    - a. "Who was this passage originally written to and why was it written to them?"
    - b. "Does the things in this passage apply directly to me or was it just for a particular person or group?" (Some things are not meant for us to follow today)
    - c. When you run across difficult phrases ask, "What does these words mean?"
    - c. "How does this apply to me?" For instance: "Are there commands to obey? Sins to avoid? Lessons to apply? Examples to follow? Principles to live by?"

#### **B. As we study the Bible we should guard against the danger of misusing it!**

1. We must guard against approaching Bible study with preconceived ideas (**Mt. 22:29**)
  - a. They started with a belief – There is no resurrection – then went to scriptures
  - b. If I go into a study already believing one thing without being open to the possibility of being wrong, I will likely never come to a knowledge of the truth!
  - c. Some take a pre-established belief & then search for some scripture to back it up
2. We also must guard against taking things out of context & the misapplication of scripture:
  - a. One good example is God's instructions to Hosea (**Hosea 1:2**) → Does this mean I should go and take a wife of harlotry for myself? What does God mean here?
  - b. This is how many justify the use of instrumental music in our worship (**Psalms 150**) – Without observing the difference in the Old Covenant and the New!
  - c. This is how some come to believe that only faith alone saves us (**Rom 3:28**) & they see that Paul is talking about works as a system of justification! (**Jas 2:24**)
3. People need to realize that the Bible is not like the bathroom reader books you buy!
  - a. Open to any page, read, & understand it – Each page is unrelated to the others
  - b. The Bible is one message from the beginning to the end – God's Plan For Redeeming Man – Every part of the Bible is inter-related to the other parts

#### **C. There are different approaches to studying God's word:**

1. First of all, you can study the Bible by randomly studying various sections:
  - a. There's nothing wrong with just opening up reading and studying sections at random – like a daily devotional reading (what better daily reader is there?)
  - b. There is profit in this – If you in a situation where you have just a little bit of time, you can study a wide range of scriptures – It's kind of like a potluck meal!
  - c. If this is the only way you study it will leave you weak! You'll likely miss the grand scheme of the Bible, context will be lost, & you may take things out of context
2. You can also approach Bible study in a topical manner:
  - a. This is simply where you choose a particular Bible subject and look at all the passages you can find on that one subject and study them
  - c. When studying this way the concordance in your Bible or a topical Bible proves helpful – Also, you can read all the cross references in the margins
  - b. This method allows you to really dig deeper & more fully grasp a given subject
3. You can also study the Bible in a textual manner: (**1 Cor. 13 – Study on Love**)
  - a. This is where you sit down with a chapter or section of text and study that section in depth in a verse by verse manner – Spend more time & do more research
  - b. You will learn a great amount more than with other methods, you pick up lessons and details you'd normally miss, and you get the message as a whole
  - c. You will minimize the danger of misunderstanding or taking things out of context
4. Finally, you can study the Bible as one big unit: (**Acts 7 – Stephen's Sermon**)
  - a. This is where you study it from the open to the close – Certainly involves more time
  - b. You watch the grand scheme unfold – From the first sin to the promises of Christ, to the life of Christ, our response to Christ, & to the promised return of Christ!
  - c. You will be able to better place events and people and know how they fit together

**CONCLUSION:** The main point is simple: **JUST STUDY!** Keep the proper attitude & guard against misusing God's word!